

Results of Social Media Tsunami Drill

San Francisco/Monterey Bay Areas

All numbers current at 2:30 PM PDT – Thursday March 26, 2015

Wednesday, March 25 at 10:15 AM PDT was the annual test of the tsunami communications and warning system in the state of California. The National Weather Service and California Office of Emergency Services conduct this test in conjunction with Tsunami Preparedness Week. This test has focused on sounding a tone through the Weather Radio system and sending that tone to broadcast radio and television stations. Various warning systems in coastal counties and communities across the state are activated, depending on the discretion of the various jurisdictions. This is not sent as a “live code” test which means that no actual Tsunami Warning is issued and there is no expectation or requirement for emergency sirens, cell phone warnings, or variable message signs on highways to be activated in the San Francisco and Monterey Bay Areas. The live code test is issued for the North Coast (Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties) only.

This year, building off the successes of last year’s first ever social media component into the drill, the National Weather Service office in Monterey again created a Bilingual Facebook and a Twitter Tsunami Drill to coincide with the traditional communications test. The goal was to expand on last year’s drill and study how social media can enhance and impact the emergency messaging process for tsunamis and see how many people could be reached by the drill.

Leading up to the drill, NWS Monterey contacted all local Bay Area media and emergency management partners to inform them of the test and request their support with sharing the images on social media. Outreach to fans and followers from the public on Facebook and Twitter was also done prior to this event. NWS Monterey also reached out in advance to national and state level emergency response, media, and private enterprise partners to ensure a broad group and cross section of participants.

There were no major issues in this year’s test. The test message was broadcast from the National Weather Service at 10:15 AM PDT and simultaneous bilingual Facebook and Twitter messages were shared. Local media and emergency response partners and the public all shared the images and messages to ensure a wide reach. A more detailed summary of the results and comparison to last year is on the next page.

By the numbers, the Facebook portion of the drill was much more successful than the Twitter portion. 18.5K people saw the Twitter graphic while 133K saw the Facebook graphic. Numbers increased dramatically from last year’s Facebook drill – but were much lower on Twitter than last year’s numbers. The Spanish language portion of the drills did not reach as many people as last year unfortunately.

The social media drill will continue as a routine part of our annual tsunami communications test. Some lessons learned are that the public must consider this to be just one part of an effective warning system. Social media is not the only form to get the word out, nor is it always the quickest, most accurate, or most effective. Traditional communication methods will continue to be important parts of the warning

puzzle. There are many pitfalls to consider when including social media in warning operations, but we must include it due to its extensive reach and ability to quickly travel in a viral nature. Care must be taken to ensure that messages are accurate and timely, and distributed via a credible source.

English Language

Facebook Tsunami Drill

Year	Shared	Liked	Reach	Comments	New Fans that day
2014	480	669	24,800	40	48
2015	1,600	2,700	133,000	292	105

Twitter Tsunami Drill

Year	Retweeted	Favorited	Total Impressions	New Followers that day
2014	526	43	81,309	109
2015	191	24	18,501	41

Spanish Language

Facebook Tsunami Drill

Year	Shared	Liked	Reach	Comments	New Fans that day
2014	21	65	2,769	1	48
2015	6	37	3,000	4	105

Twitter Tsunami Drill

Year	Retweeted	Favorited	Total Impressions	New Followers That Day
2014	164	27	20,090	109
2015	17	3	4,807	41

For Comparison's Sake, **prior** to the test:

Year	Facebook Page Likes	Twitter Followers
2014	5,291	1,950
2015	15,685	15,603